

No 14

SERMON

Preached to the

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners,

AT

St. Mary-le-Bow,

ON

Monday, *March* 5th, 1738.

By SAMUEL SMITH, L.L.B. *K*

*Rector of Allhallows on the Wall, and Lecturer
of St. Alban's Wood-street.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for M. DOWNING, in *Bartholomew-Close,*
near West-Smithfield. 1738.

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Monday, the 17th 1788.



By SAMUEL SMITH, L.L.B.

of the Middle Temple, and Barrister at Law,
of St. Albans, Wood Street.

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Printed for M. Dawson, in B. Johnson's Alley,
near West-Smithfield, 1788.



ST. MATTH. IX. 13.

—*For I am not come to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.*



THE Pharisees taking Exceptions at our Saviour's Familiarity with Publicans and Sinners, as being inconsistent with his Pretensions to a more eminent Sanctity ; He vindicates this Part of his Conduct, from the Authority of one of their own Prophets, who confirms the moral Law in that Precedence, which it so justly claims, of ritual Institutions : *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.* Whatsoever the Tenour of the Jewish Oeconomy might be, it was not ordain'd to restrain any generous Principle in human Nature, or to destroy all the Seeds of mutual Benevolence. The important Duty of

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Charity, in all its Branches, is confessedly of a superior Obligation, and enforc'd by the Example of Christ, as well as engrafted into the very Constitution of His Gospel. For He came *not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* 'Tis almost needless to remark, that, by the *Righteous* here, we are not to understand those, to whom our Lord addressed. He could discern between a real and counterfeit Virtue, and seems rather to have intended a tacit Reproof of their Hypocrisy and Presumption, in assuming this Denomination. The Persons mark'd out under the amiable and comprehensive Character of *the Righteous*, are those, who distinguish themselves by an inflexible Adherence to the Rule of Duty, and plead no Dispensation or Licence for any occasional Deviations from it. There was not the same Room for the Exercise of infinite Mercy among such, as *walk in all the Commandments of God, and need no Repentance.* It extends to all, but appears brighter, and more conspicuous, when display'd among *them, that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death*; as Light may acquire an additional Lustre from the Shade which surrounds it. *For this Purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* His Religion was calculated to break the Dominion of Sin, and deliver those, who were *brought into Bondage* by it, from their
their

their miserable Captivity. They that are free want no Deliverer, and *they that be whole need not a Physician, but they that be sick.* He labour'd the Recovery of *customary* or *habitual* Sinners, and sought out them as the fittest Objects of His Commiseration. The Prosecution of this Subject will lead me

I. To treat on Repentance, the great Duty which Christ came to inculcate.

II. To observe, what particular Alleviations may sometime accompany the Guilt of Sinners, and recommend them, with a peculiar Distinction, to the Divine Pity and Regard.

III. I SHALL conclude with a suitable Application.

First, I AM to treat on Repentance.

SIN is an Act of Hostility and Rebellion against God: And when we commit it, we cou'd not charge His Proceedure with Injustice, did He inflict on us a Punishment adequate to our Demerits. But He importunes us by Call on Call, by Summons on Summons, to return to our Duty, and be restor'd to His Favour. He entreats us, in the melting Strains of an earnest Suppliant,

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Suppliant, to accept the Overtures of Mercy, and Reconciliation. *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel? Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* No Words, surely, can imprint a more lively Image of Tendernefs and Affection on the Mind.

As corrupt as the World is, there are few, if any, who discover a Propension to Sin, merely for the sake of Sinning. The Pleasure or Advantage propos'd by the Pursuit, strikes on our leading Passion, and bounds our Prospect; the Unlawfulness of it, as such, has no share in the Temptation. Our Judgments are in one Interest, but our Wills and Inclinations in another. When thus divided between two contrary Attractions, Men will separate Sin, by some artful Distinction, from the Guilt that cleaves to it, and reconcile the most flagrant Contradiction in Religion, the Service of *Christ* and *Belial*. Enormous Vices will be palliated, under the extenuating Phrase of human Infirmities.

THE Penitent must evidence the Sincerity of his Contrition by Obedience, and a Renunciation of those Satisfactions, wherein *the carnal Mind* places its supreme Felicity: He must

must have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, lest, by his Relapse, it should in the Event happen to him according to the true Proverb, *The Dog is turned to his own Vomit again, and the Sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the Mire.* He must maintain an Indifference to the World, and resist the soft Inchantments of sensual Pleasure, which will unbend the Firmness of his Virtue. Sin, on his nearer Approaches to it, may have Allurements to captivate him. His Innocence therefore will be better secur'd by keeping at a Distance, than by a false Confidence in his own Ability to make either a Conquest, or Retreat. This Self-confidence is apt to steal insensibly on us, and we must guard against it, as the most fatal, and groundless Delusion. For no Virtues can be attain'd, much less can they be cultivated to any Degree of Maturity, by the uttermost Stretch of our natural Powers. What *St. Paul* affirms of his Reasoning and Ministry, may be apply'd, with some Allowance, as a just Description of the Scantiness of our Faculties, when unassisted by the Influence and Co-operation of *the Spirit of God.* *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God.* The Endowments of Nature, and all the acquir'd Accomplishments which we are Owners of, will be of little Significance, without such a Portion of
of

of Grace, as is necessary to carry us thro' the dangerous Stages of human Life. *The Spirit of Truth* descends into the darkeſt Retirements of the Soul, and darts his Rays thro' the thickeſt Miſts of Ignorance and Error. There muſt be a ſuperior Principle to overpoize our natural Propenſions, and re-eſtabliſh Reason on its Throne, after it has been baffled by Temptations. There muſt be ſome internal Monitor, to humble our aspiring Underſtandings to the Belief of what is reveal'd, and bend our reluctant Wills to the Practice of what is commanded.

II. I PROCEED to obſerve, what particular Alleviations may ſometime accompany the Guilt of Sinners, and recommend them to the Divine Pity and Regard.

THE Bowels of Divine Mercy yearn over thoſe that are loſt, and there is no Lenity or Compaſſion, that can vie with God's Indulgence. But in certain Inſtances affignable, Men may ſin without the Approbation of their Reason, or the formal Conſent of their Wills. They are betray'd by the Treachery of their own deceitful Hearts, when they leaſt diſtrufteſt them; or born down by the Violence of Paſſions, which they cou'd not immediately ſubdue; or ſurpriz'd, in an unguarded Moment, by inviting
Temptations.

Temptations. The Guilt of Sinners may be farther extenuated by other Considerations, and placed in more favourable Views.

(1.) OUR Actions will ever vary according to the Bent of our predominant Desires and Aversions, and these again according to the different Impressions, that are stamp'd on us by Education. Many are indebted for the Regularity of their Lives, to the Advantage of an early Initiation into *the Paths of Righteousness*. Their Graces have made a gradual Progress, and cannot charm, or dazle us more under any Allusion us'd to represent them, than that of *the shining Light*, or Light of the Morning, *that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day*. Having been train'd up in the School of Religion, they still retain in their Memories, and exemplify in their Practice, the Rules which it prescribes. Others, on the contrary, have been enter'd into *the way of the Wicked that is as Darkness*, and had their Understandings obscur'd with a Cloud of involuntary Error, and moral Corruption. They labour under the most confirm'd Prepossession against Religion; a Prepossession form'd by bad Principles, worse Examples, and the Biass of their own deprav'd Inclinations. Or Evil became familiar and habitual, before *the Day dawn'd and the Day-star arose in their Hearts*, i. e. before Christi-

anity had gotten the Ascendant in them, and rectified the Irregularities of their misguided Reason. Vice insinuated itself into their yielding Minds in Youth, gradually enlarg'd its Empire as they advanc'd to riper Years, and laid in nothing but penitential Sorrow to employ the last Scene of Life. The unhappy Circumstances of these Persons, seem to result rather from unavoidable Necessity, than deliberate Choice. For had Virtue and Vice been painted to them, at a proper Season, in their true Colours, and genuin Completion, it is probable, that the former wou'd have engag'd their Love, and the latter rais'd only their Detestation.

(2.) IT is observable of Sinners, when they become Profelytes to Religion, that they generally carry their Piety and Constancy to a more exalted Heighth: So that the sublimest Virtues have been the Effects of a sincere and lively Repentance. A Reflection on the large Catalogue of their past Offences, and a grateful Sense of God's Mercy, which was illustrated in the Pardon of those Offences, inspire them with more heroical Resolutions, and kindle up in them all the Fervors of Devotion. *They go on unto Perfection, not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works,* or even contenting themselves with the common Attainments in the Christian Life. They were long
adding

adding to *the Multitude of their Transgressions*, and increasing the Debt which they ow'd to God; but now they determine to balance the Account, and, was that possible, to pay off all Arrears of Obedience with Interest. That Hope, which before lay groveling on the Earth, and center'd in its perishable Objects, soars to *Things above*, and raises itself as high as Heaven. That heady intemperate Zeal, which once drove them to persecute the Church, being refin'd into a Divine Flame, will animate them to *endure* not only Persecution, but *the Cross* for it. *St. Peter* was attach'd to his Master with greater Fidelity, because he had deny'd Him, and, by the Fortitude of the Martyr, aton'd for the Cowardice of the shameful Renegade. *St. Paul*, after his own Conversion, *labour'd more abundantly than they all*, and travell'd, like the Sun, from East to West, converting Multitudes by the Power of his Eloquence. In Religion, as well as in the Affairs of common Life, past Escapes may be retriev'd by Diligence, and future Improvements. Of all that illustrious List of Penitents which are recorded as Patterns for our Imitation, none shine with a more distinguish'd Lustre, none made more generous and uncommon Proficiencies, than those, who *loved much*, because *many Sins* had been *forgiven* to them.

○ If Christ, *who is the Image of God*, came to call Sinners to Repentance, this will most highly aggravate the Charge of a final Impenitence. *The Men of Nineve shall rise up in the Judgment with this Generation, and shall condemn it ; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas ; and behold, a greater than Jonas*, or any of the Prophets, is with us by his *glorious Gospel* ; and presses, by more awakening Motives, the Duty of Repentance. We cannot well rely too much on the Efficacy of His Intercession, and the inestimable Value of His Blood, but we may forfeit our Interest in them by Presumption, as well as Despair. We must not build Conclusions for our own Security on that single Instance of a Penitent on the Cross, sav'd by Him in the last Hour. So ready are Men to flatter themselves with ill-founded Hopes of Acceptance, that the Saving of this one Soul has, it may be fear'd, thro' our own Misinterpretations of the Case, endanger'd the Loss of many. Whensoever God speaks to us by the Revelation of His Son, the Ministry of His Word, the Monitions of His Grace or Providence, we shou'd look on it as a Voice from Heaven, calling us from a State of Sin, and embrace the Call. But it is obvious,

(3.) To

(3.) To apply this Discourse to the Occasion for which we are now assembled together: For the principal Deduction arising from it, is the Strength of that Obligation, which lies on us to promote the Conversion of Sinners. No Sentiments of Religion, or even common Compassion, can warm his Breast, who neglects to perform this indispensable Office of Humanity.

ARE Men tied and bound in the Chain of their Sins, are they entangled in the Fetters of a bad Education, and evil Habits: You put useful Tracts into their Hands, and render yourselves *Christian Monitors*. By these, You are instrumental in enlightning their Understandings, and mortifying their undisciplin'd Appetites, the greatest Bars to a Reformation. By these, You furnish them with beautiful Descriptions of Virtue, and pull off the Disguises of Vice; You display the eternal Rewards and Punishments, which respectively await them.

AGAIN, a Probability of converting Sinners, and disposing them to *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*, demonstrates the peculiar Excellence of this Undertaking. There are not wanting Examples of some, who have been reclaim'd by Your seasonable Interposition, in
Conjunction

Conjunction with the salutary Aids of Grace, and effac'd their Miscarriages by a true Penitence. But supposing it improbable, that you should succeed in your primary and darling View of the Sinner's Reformation; then, Charity to the Community obliges You to interpose for his Correction; for the Contagion may be spread by one corrupted Member. You have not lost Sight of your great Example, but tread in the Steps of the best Reformer which the World was ever blessed with. We may, with Pleasure, perceive an apparent Similitude both of Design, and of Measures in the Prosecution of it. Did He converse with Sinners, and come to call them to Repentance? You make Sinners the Objects of your Care, and consequently your Employment a lovely Transcript of His Benevolence. Did He instruct them by his Doctrine? You apply Arguments for the Conviction of their Judgments, and endeavour to prevent the Rise of those Enormities, which You afterward prosecute. The Advances You make toward a national Reformation, by dispersing good Books, (not to infuse into the lower Sort of People a Spirit of Enthusiasm, but to implant in them rational Principles of Religion) are too considerable to escape unobserv'd, or to be mention'd without their due Commendation. Did He invite and gain Sinners by the spotless Ho-

linefs

liness of his Life? You, I trust, *order Your Conversation aright*, and shew them *a Pattern of good Works*. *Your Light so shines before Men*, that it is too bright to be eclips'd by any diminishing Insinuations. Thus far it may be said, the Parallel will hold, but no further. For Christ disclaim'd all secular Authority, and has left no Precept, or Precedent for enforcing Religion by the Civil Sword. But without appealing to an Apostle's Decision of the Point, we may infer from the Nature of Society, and the original Ends for which the Magistrate was appointed, that he is *a Revenger for Wrath*, or *to execute Wrath on him that doth Evil*. The Dissolute must be reclaim'd, or check'd by the Methods of Persuasion, by spiritual Censures, or by the Interposition of the Civil Power. Should the most forcible Persuasives to Reformation, address'd from the Pulpit, or the Press, prove ineffectual; should Censures pass'd on them by proper Authority, in Consequence of Christ's Institution, have no Force to rouse them out of their Lethargy; at this melancholy Conjunction, the Magistrate is to use that Power with which he is invested. The prior Engagements which he was under in his private Capacity, to advance the common Welfare, superadded to the Importance of the publick Character which he sustains, will admonish him not to stand neuter to the united

united Interests of Religion, and the Commu-
 nity. For Vice, if suffer'd to spread like a
 raging Pestilence, and infect all Orders of Men,
 will soon bring on a total Dissolution of any
 Form of Government, and introduce *Confu-
 sion, with every evil Work.* His Authority de-
 rives its Support and Influence from the Re-
 ligion which he defends. He cannot esteem
 those as Friends, whatsoever specious Titles
 they may assume, who would circumscribe his
 Office by such narrow Boundaries, and blunt
 the Edge of his Sword. Gaming and De-
 bauchery call for his Vengeance, as well as
 Robberies and Murders; and will, probably,
 if not suppress'd in time by it, be productive
 of them. For the Transition is easy from one
 Crime to more, and there is a Chain or Con-
 nection which holds them together. Vice, in
 all well regulated States, has annex'd to it a
 Train of Infamy, and Civil Penalties. In our
 own, it is discountenanc'd by *Orders of Sessions,
 Royal Proclamations, and Acts of Parliament.*
 We have Virtue and Morality guarded by the
 same Laws, which secure to us every other
 Blessing. A Corruption of them amounts,
 in an impartial Construction of it, to an In-
 fringement of our Laws, and an Invasion of
 our most valuable Properties.

ALL Ages have had their Stains and Blemishes; but Complaints of the Degeneracy of the Times are not, perhaps, more general than just. The frequent Attacks made on the Fundamentals of Christianity, have been so well repell'd by the venerable Fathers and eminent Lights of our Church, that they remain invincible, and triumph over all the Attempts to discredit them. But the most learned and accurate Confutations of the Theory and Principles of Infidelity, do not always prove a sufficient Antidote against that baneful Influence which it has on our Morals. It is not possible to shut up those Avenues, whereby a reciprocal Communication is maintain'd between the Head and Heart.

THIS Communication will account for the Origin of epidemical Sins, and a reigning Depravity in Manners. — I might here expatiate on a most disagreeable Topick, and delineate a various Scene of Impiety. — A Vein of Obscenity or Profaneness not seldom runs thro' Conversation, in Defiance of the receiv'd Forms of Decency and Breeding; which have, on many Occasions, been found no feeble Barriers to Religion. — We may hear Discourse adopted for Wit, which has bolder Strokes of Blasphemy than Humour,

to recommend it. — Curfing and Swearing abound in our Streets, Prevarication and Perjury in our Courts of Judicature. — The Day fet apart for the more folemn Worfhip of God, is devoted by fome, as constantly as it returns, to Pleafure, and rural Excursions: One of the fad Prognofticks of a dying Attention to the publick Offices of Religion, and to that wife domeftick Oeconomy, which has been the fruitful Parent of that Wealth they mifapply. — Luxury and Profufion being unreftain'd by any *fumptuary* Laws, do the Work of a flow Confumption, and impair by Degrees our Fortunes and Conftitutions. — There can be no Society without Government, and no Government without a Subordination, or Submiffion of Inferiors to Superiors. But Numbers have imbib'd a *levelling* Spirit, which prompts them to *defpife Dominion, and fpeak evil of Dignities*. They would deface all publick Characters, and the Stamp both of Sacred and Civil Authority. The too vifible Prevalence of fo licentious a Spirit among us, might deserve from me more than a cursory Animadverfion, was it not to be rank'd with thofe Evils, which You may *lament*, but cannot *remedy*. No deep Penetration is requir'd to pronounce on its Malignity, or to forefee, that the Growth of it may difturb the happy Calm, and Serenity of the Kingdom.

THE late remarkable Increase of Bagnios has questionless afforded You Matter for uncomfortable Reflections, and an Incitement to redouble Your Vigilance. A Resort to Places, and a Relish for Pleasures, which administer new Fewel to the impure Flames of Lust, have a natural Tendency to incline Persons either to cancel the Marriage Contract by mutual Agreement, or violate it by secret Lewdness, and *give themselves up to work all Uncleanneſs with Greedineſs.* — I ſhall not deſcend to a more particular Enumeration of thoſe Sins, for whoſe Prevention, or Cure, You unite. Your printed Accounts, which carry no Air of Falſhood or Exaggeration, inform us of their Number and Quality: It muſt be difficult for the moſt curious Obſerver to point out any Immoralities which have not already fallen under Your Cogniſance, or to ſuggeſt any new Expedients for the Reformation of thoſe which have. The Work of Reformation has a very powerful, tho' not inſuperable Oppoſition, to encounter from the Corruptions of Mankind; and implies too glaring a Condemnation of their Practice, to be well receiv'd by them. From a reflex View of your ſucceſsful Progreſs, one would imagine, that we muſt have look'd back to a more diſtant Period of Time than the Cloſe of the laſt Century,

to have dated the Institution of these excellent Societies. You boast not Perfection either in the Scheme, or the Execution. But, if a right Principle is the main Ingredient in every Undertaking entitled to our Esteem and Encouragement, You appear to be actuated only by a Zeal for the Glory of God and the Good of Men; the noblest and most applauded Motive that can influence human Actions. As to the Rules whereby it is conducted, they are the best which Your approv'd Wisdom and Experience have hitherto enabled You to discover. — The Devil has his Agents, employ'd in advancing his Dominion, and a formidable Host is embattled against You; for You *wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against spiritual Wick- edness in high Places.* You list Yourself under the Banner of the *Most High*, and form an Alliance to support the Kingdom of *His dear Son.* As you have the Hearts and Prayers of all good Magistrates, and good Men, engag'd on Your Side, let me exhort You to *endure Hardness as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ*, and rather to be animated than discouraged at the seeming Inequality of the Combat. You can have no Party but the common Enemies of Virtue, to make a Stand against this *voluntary*, this *disinterested*, this *glorious Confederacy.*

May

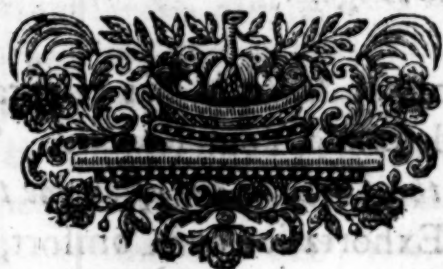
May those who are in Authority contribute by a vigorous Execution of the Laws, and may we all in our several Stations contribute, by our Examples and Influence at least, to the Suppression of Immorality: So would Sin and Blasphemy be confin'd to Hell, and their inseparable Attendants too, Sorrow and Misery.

BUT, in calculating Events, we must consider Mankind as they are in their present deplorable State of Imperfection. Tho' Christ came *to call Sinners to Repentance*, yet were there many not to be wrought on by his Doctrine or Miracles. Should Your Calls to Reformation not meet with that Regard which they challenge, in a profligate Age, or should You miscarry in Your charitable Labours for the Happiness of others, You will still have the inconceivable Felicity of *making Your own Calling and Election sure*. You will be crown'd with the secret Applause of your own Consciences, and the concurrent Approbation of God and His Angels.

THE Prophet *Malachi* has celebrated Your Piety, and describ'd Your Reward. *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, (for mutual Exhortation and Comfort, no doubt) and the Lord hearkned, and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him for them*

them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that Day when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare them as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the Righteous and the Wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

F I N I S.





The FORTY-FOURTH
ACCOUNT
OF THE
PROGRESS made in the
Cities of *London and Westminster,*
And Places adjacent,
By the *Societies* for Promoting
Reformation of Manners;

By furthering the Execution of the LAWS
against Profaneness and Immorality, and
by other Christian Methods.

THE Reasonableness of Uniting in Societies, for more effectually carrying on a Work of this Nature, needs not be further proved, after what has been said with so much Advantage upon the Subject by the *Annual Reformation Sermons*; as also by the excellent Author of the *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, who hath this remarkable Passage: *The Scandal*, saith he, *brought upon Religion,*

Religion, as it was not contracted by the Irregularities of one or two Persons, but by associated and common Crimes; so neither will it be removed by a few single and private Reformations. There must be Combinations and publick Confederacies in Virtue, to ballance and counterpoise those of Vice, or she will never recover that Honour which she acquir'd by the general Piety of her Professors.

THANKS be to God, many such Combinations and publick Confederacies are now in Being, who make it a great Part of their Business to oppose associated, as well as particular Offenders.

THE *Societies for Reformation of Manners* are eminently of that Number: And the Usefulness of such Confederacies is visible from what has been actually brought about through GOD's Blessing on the Means made use of by the said Societies, far beyond what could have been hoped for from any private Endeavours. Multitudes, for these *Forty four Years* last past, have been prosecuted, and punish'd according to Law, for lewd and scandalous Practices. Great Numbers of Bawdy-houses, Sodomitical Haunts, Common Gaming-houses, and other Disorderly Houses, have been suppressed and shut up; and the Streets very much purg'd from the wretched Tribe of *Night-walking Prostitutes* and most detestable *Sodomites*. Many young Men, taken with lewd Women, have, by their being brought to timely Shame and Punishment, been discouraged, and turned (as we have reason to hope) from following such sinful Courses, which often cause them to defraud their Parents, Masters, &c. and bring themselves to utter Ruin. Many
Thousands

Thousands of *good Books* have been likewise dispersed by these *Societies* throughout the Kingdom, and put into the Hands of lewd and profane Persons, to awaken them to a Sense of their Sins. By these various Methods, many Persons have, thro' Divine Grace, been brought to a Sense of their Sin and extream Danger; and tho' they have at first been exasperated against the Instruments of awakening them out of their dreadful Lethargy, and stopping them in their sinful Courses; yet have they afterwards blessed God for their Recovery, and been heartily thankful to those, who had been serviceable to them in their happy Conversion.

THIS Undertaking, begun by very few Persons, has mightily spread it self, not only in *Great Britain*, but in Foreign Parts. And the great Good which, by God's Blessing, has been done by the said Societies, has very much animated their Endeavours. They likewise have been encouraged by several Royal Proclamations, Orders of Sessions, Presentments of Grand-Juries in many Counties in *England*; by the Lord-Mayors and Court of Aldermen of the City of *London*; by many Sermons of the Right Reverend the Bishops, and other eminent Divines, preached to the Societies; and by the Writings of other learned Men; as also by the solemn Approbation of a considerable Number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Honourable Judges of *England* and *Ireland*, and the Commissioners of several Protestant Churches.

It must be confessed, That Profaneness and Debauchery do still very much abound, for Want of a more general and hearty Concurrence in this Work of Persons of all Orders amongst us, in Proportion to the Greatness of the Concern.

THE said Societies have prosecuted, and been assisting in Prosecuting, from the *First* of *December* 1737, to the *First* of *December* 1738, divers sorts of Offenders, *viz.*

For Lewd and Disorderly Practices	_____	52
Sabbath-Breakers	_____	493
	Total	— 545

Including 104 Butchers, indicted at *Hicks's* Hall for a Nuisance, as being common Sabbath-Breakers, who were all fined.

THE Total Number of Persons prosecuted in or near *London* only, for *Debauchery* and *Profaneness*, for Forty-four Years last past, are calculated at about *One hundred and one Thousand, six Hundred and eighty three.*

THEY have also been assisting in bringing to Punishment several *Sodomitical Houses*, as well as divers Persons for *Sodomy*, and *Sodomitical Practices*, who have been prosecuted by the Direction, and at the Charge of the Government.

THOSE therefore that have a just Zeal for the Honour of GOD; who desire to prevent the spreading of the Leprosy of Sin, who are unwilling to have their Children and other Relations, or their Friends and Servants, corrupted by ill Examples and wicked Allurements: Those that sincerely wish well to those excellent and hopeful Nurseries of

Piety

Piety and good Manners, the CHARITY SCHOOLS; and would be heartily grieved to see the Christian Instruction and pious Education that Children receive therein, miscarry, through prevailing open Temptations to Wickedness, and a general Contempt of the pure and holy Religion of our blessed Redeemer *Jesus Christ*: Those, lastly, who have any due Love to their Country, and would prevent a National Guilt, and thereby keep off National Judgments, cannot possibly, one would think, but heartily approve and assist, according to their Ability, this useful Design for suppressing Profaneness and Immorality. For, *Does not Righteousness exalt a Nation? Is not Sin a Reproach to any People?*

Now, Whereas some have maliciously insinuated, That it is not *Reformation* which is intended, but the getting of Money from Delinquents; and by such vile Reports have imposed on some very well-meaning People: It is hereby declared to the World, That such a Charge upon these Societies is absolutely false. It is allowed, that some base and wicked Persons (not engag'd, or in the least concerned in this Work) have extorted Money from Offenders, and sometimes from honest Men. But all such Practices are utterly detested by these Societies, (who have strictly enquired after such Persons, and when discovered, have brought them to Punishment) nor do they know or believe that any who are engag'd with them are chargeable with such Iniquities. And to prevent as much as possible, all Suspicion of a mer-

a mercenary Design or Principle in any that act in the Business of *Reformation*, the GENTLEMEN concern'd have all along recommended and insisted upon it with their Friends, that those who give Information against *Vice* or *Profaneness*, should never receive that Part of the Penalty which the Law allows the Informer ; and it has not come to their Knowledge, that any such Person hath acted otherwise. However, if any Person, or Persons, concern'd in this good Design, should at any time be chargeable with any of the evil Practices before-mentioned, or even with taking the Reward which the Law allows them ; it is humbly requested of all that are heartily concerned for the Interest of Religion, that they will give Notice thereof to any of the said Societies.

N. B. *The Persons concerned in this Design, confine their Prosecutions to the Offences mention'd in this Account.*

AND for the further preventing any Objections from those who are too much dispos'd to raise them, against this necessary Work, that there is more Regard had to the Punishment, than to the Conversion of profane and vicious Persons; it may not be improper to acquaint the Publick : That in Conjunction with other pious and proper Methods of Instruction, Admonition, and Reproof, the number of Books written and published for those and the like Ends, and given away at their own Charge, are calculated at *above Four hundred and forty four Thousand, eight Hundred and fifty.*